Depot Town Rag

November 1987

FREE 100% RAG CONTENT

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Ypsilanti: the city that works
Depot Town: the neighborhood that volunteers

Few communities in recent history can see such dramatic and direct results from volunteerism and creative community cooperation as has Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town. In just a decade, neighbors in this old railroad district have brought their small commercial district from a 'skid row' image to that of a vibrant and vital community of activity, warmth and excitement.

Hanging on through all those bad times were several family businesses that have survived and prospered over the years. It is not unusual, today, to see the third generation working in the shop or serving behind the counter. Private sector properties have been improved and brought up to local governmental codes and they now represent the largest single group of properties in the city which have steadily appreciated in value.

The public sector spaces have kept abreast of this radical come-back, often leading the way and providing a good faith example for private developers and owners. Such constant improvement and upgrading has created an attitude that 'there is always something to do' and 'we can always do better.'

A loyal and dynamic clientele has been created in which people from all over the community consider themselves 'Depot Towners.' The rehabilitation of Ypsilanti's Depot Town continues with great enthusiasm.

Holiday cedar roping for building facades is available from Joe Wizauer at Hon's Flowers at cost ($18 per 20 ft. roll). You'll find no vinyl decorations on Depot Town buildings this season!

Sixth and final in a series on the Michigan Sesquicentennial theme: "A Celebration of What Was and Will Be."

FORDLAND

No series about Depot Town's relationship to Michigan's 150th anniversary can be told without noticing the contribution and penalties of technology. Every family at the Farmers' Market this Saturday can tell of some relationship to Michigan's automobile industry. The Sauk Trail became Michigan Avenue became the Michigan Central Railroad became Interstate 94 became a short helicopter ride from Domino's Farms to Tiger Stadium. When a sleek Detroit-made behemoth stops at Miller's for an ice cream cone on its way to the Art Fair in the Ann Arbor, Depot Towners realize that, this too, is a statement of our history in the scheme of things Michigan.

American communities entered the industrial revolution through the technology first seen at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition for 1876. Probably very few natives of Ypsilanti attended that event, but the effects of the new ideas exhibited there certainly reached the wilderness with alarming speed. Steam engines began to push west and narrow guage railroads snaked even further into the northern forests.

When Civil War broke out, Michigan militias mustered at the depot in Ypsilanti and were put up in the barracks which later became the Thompson Block (Antiques, Fantasee Lighting, etc.) Today that building is one of the few still awaiting careful restoration and preservation.

At the time of the Civil War, only 45,000 people lived in Detroit and Chicago was just beginning to be seen as a national trade and transportation center. The Michigan Central rail

continued overleaf

for the good of the block
in the Old Caboose
unless otherwise noted

Foundation
first Thursday

Artists & Artisans
second Monday

Antique Dealers
Tuesdays at 6:10 p.m.
Old Town Restaurant

Association
third Thursday

Merchants
Thursdays at 8:00 a.m.
Old Town Restaurant

Engine Club
fourth Thursday

Engineering Society
as announced

Victorian Holiday Open Houses
Sunday 11/15
District-wide

Festival of Lights grand opening
Sunday 11/23
Riverside Park

New "Italianate" Series Imminent

After the succeessful six-part Michigan Sesquicentennial previewed in The Depot Town Rag during 1987, DTA members have suggested a series which focuses on the architectural uniqueness of the neighborhood. Local scholars are now putting together their notes on the Commercial Italianate style found in districts such as ours will preview that treastise in these pages in 1988. If anyone else is going to replace a cornice or uncover still more goodies from the Nineteenth Century, they'd better get it done fast -- if they want to be included.

Vintage Passion
Unusual & Different
Costume Jewelry
32 East Cross

City Body, Inc.
20 East Cross
Front Alignments
Special - **$24.95**

Cross Street Antiques
33 East Cross

Miller's Ice Cream
ICE CREAM
42 E. Cross
•
Historic Depot Town
OPEN ALL YEAR!

B & D Retail
Plumbing & Heating
310 North River 487-1510

WE *love to* **BUY ANTIQUES**
DEPOT EXCHANGE ANTIQUES
54 E Cross. • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

Our Little Secret
Resale Clothing & Other Niceties
23 East Cross

Post Cards

Another exciting prospect for the new year is the proposal to create new 'historical' post cards of the history and architecture of Depot Town. Photographers, printmakers and other artists are encouraged to bring their concepts to the (third Thursday) Depot Town Association meeting to get the project rolling. What could be more authentic for this old railroad district?

River Artworks
CUSTOM FRAMING
DESIGNER MATS
482-8785
48 E. CROSS
DEPOT TOWN

Depot Doo
Fine Design in Hair Style
25 East Cross • 484-3045

Hon's
Flowers & Fancies
46 East Cross 482-2124

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
in historic Depot Town

PEDDLER'S PATH
44 East Cross

D.T.A. Calendar of Events:

November
15 Victorian Holiday Open Houses
22 - Jan 2 Festival of Lights

December
Christmas Art Fair
Madrigal Singers concert
Quarterly meeting

January
9 Winter Jazz Series

February
13 Winter Jazz Series

March
Quarterly meeting
12 Winter Jazz Series

April
Easter Egg Hunt w/CBC

May
Memorial Day Parade
Tailgate Swap Meet

June
Huron River Days
Quarterly Meeting
Frog Island Jazz Festival

July
Fourth of July Parade
Boomer Days

August
Heritage Festival
Heritage Jazz Competition
Early Engine Expo

September
Quarterly meeting & annual election

October
Fall Farm Fair
Hallowe'en Party
Lighting plan

NIFTY tourists in Depot Town last month:

EMU Faculty wives had a Saturday brunch at Aubree's Second floor, then toured ten neighborhood projects. They thank the owners and managers for showing off their proud projects.

Twenty Detroit senior citizens wrote for the directory/brochure, then prowled the block on their own.

Sandy Hooker's kindergarteners spent a Friday with the Old Caboose as their home base.

EMU dormitory RAs prowled the back alleys to find even more uniquenesses in this old railroad district.

Just about everybody stopped by the MCRR depot to congratulate the men working on brick repair along the foundation.

1987-88 Goals Set at October DTA Meeting

Most important goals for the year:

- Develop new sources for fund raising
- Edit and condense video promotional materials
- Attract the EMU student market
- Light the 'Depot Town - Welcome' sign
- Light the Old Caboose
- Race plastic ducks in the Huron River
- Hang Street Banners
- Create a workable annual budget
- Build membership in DTA and its sub groups
- Pave and light south side parking lots

Next most important:

- Permanent clean-up and snow removal
- Color photo post cards
- Boost volunteerism
- Budget review committee
- Paint backs of north side buildings
- Huron River clean-up
- New location/design for outdoor jazz facilities
- Use Freight House more

Also worth doing:

- Pursue Signal tower replication
- Improve/coordinate quality of booths at Heritage Festival
- Hightlight local history with murals
- Gazebo replacement for old tree
- Promote local history
- Sell Boomer Days to someone else
- New cover for outdoor concerts
- More interaction with member groups

Deserving of our attention:

- Rent the Caboose
- Paint Caboose interior
- Another Casino night with CBC
- Entry signs to the block
- Plant more trees
- Portable stage
- Develop Festival of Lights walking tour
- More flowers in the summer
- Weekend specialty shows
- Spring event to "save the Water Tower"
- Expand Fall Fair
- Highlight Farmers' Market at Heritage Festival
- Cookbook
- Investigate 501 (C) 3 status
- Create an up-do-date member list
- Graphic designs on back alleys and porches

The DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, Inc.

- Incorporated with the State of Michigan, Department of Commerce 21 July 1977 (CID 791-431) in conformity with Act 284, PA 1972 as amended, and Act 327, PA 1931
- 501 (c)3: Tax Exempt [Federal Employee Number A-154-595]
- Member: Washtenaw Council for the Arts
  American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers
  Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS (elected September 1987)

PRESIDENT:				
Tom Dodd	46 East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	482-6371
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT:				
Gary McKeever	23½ East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	483-4256
SECRETARY:				
Mary Doll	29 East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	482-6774
TREASURER:				
Judith Monaghan	811 Lowell	Ypsilanti, MI	48197	482-3919
SECOND VICE PRESIDENTS:				
THE HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN FOUNDATION				
Maribell Suczek	181 Beaupre	Grs. Pnte., MI	48236	885-0793
THE DEPOT TOWN MERCHANTS COMMITTEE				
Paul Fetters	48 East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	482-8785
THE DEPOT TOWN ANTIQUE ENGINE CLUB				
Ron Bracken	49800 Bog Road	Belleville, MI	48111	697-0258
THE DEPOT TOWN ARTISTS & ARTISANS				
Martha Kemnitz	807 N. Congress	Ypsilanti, MI	48187	487-9311
THE DEPOT TOWN ANTIQUE DEALERS ASSOCIATION				
Lynn Radke	29 East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	481-0555
THE DEPOT TOWN ENGINEERING SOCIETY				
Shena Thomas	41 Photo Street	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	

STANDING COMMITTEES:

MEMBERSHIP & VOLUNTEERS				
Barbara Lohr	1335 Huron River	Ypsilanti, MI	48197	485-3773
CABOOSE (Maintenance and reservations)				
Gary McKeever	23½ East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	483-4256
PUBLIC RELATIONS (NIFTY & New Marketing Concepts)				
Jerry Meadows	17 East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	485-2218
BUDGET & EVENTS				
Carolyn McKeever	23½ East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	483-4256

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: (Past Presidents)

Gary McKeever	23½ East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	483-4256
Rex Richie	1065 Maplewood	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	484-1510
Carolyn McKeever	23½ E. Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	483-4256
Tom Dodd	46 East Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	482-6371
Beverly Shankwiler	52½ E. Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	485-2747
Jerry French	39 E. Cross	Ypsilanti, MI	48198	483-1870

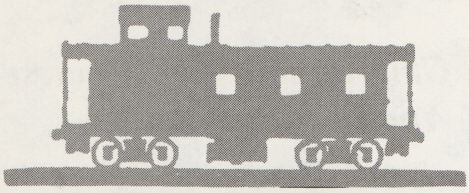
YPSI FOOD COOP
WHOLE NATURAL FOOD IN BULK OR SMALL QUANTITIES
M.,T.,Th.,F. 10-7 Wed. 10-9 312 N.River
483-1520 Sat. 9-7 Sun. 12-5

Olde Towne Coin & Gold
24 E. CROSS STREET
YPSILANTI, MI 48198
(313) 483-6155

Big Bob's Magazines
Magazines, Comics, Posters
50 East Cross 485-4930

Ike's Depot Town Barbershop
40 East Cross • 483-6300

City Radiator
110 North River 483-2248



D.T.A. 15 October 1987

Beginning a new fiscal year for D.T.A. with a hearty invitation to all members to participate.

Minutes from September meeting were approved.

Welcome to Joe Eberly, of Ypsilanti's Crime Prevention Task Force and hope we can be of help.

Treasurer's Report:

Total on hand	$13, 526.74
General fund	6478.33
Rag	(1303.30)
Hallowe'en	32.78
Jazz	3768.64
Merchants	494.00
Heritage	2752.99
Caboose	-0-

Cash to deposit

$30.00 memberships to general fund

$2030.00 to Merchants' fund

Standing Committees:

Membership & Volunteerism - Bonni Rosen will be working to up-date listing of paid members. Help Bonni with her task and put your name on her list.

Caboose is now sporting new locks. Keys are available w/$10 deposit. See Gary McKeever.

NIFTY (New Initiative For Tourism in Ypsilanti) - speciality antique shows and a variety of exhibits will begin next spring behind Follet House. Professor Malarky's 'junque' will be featured at the 'Trading Post', 21 East Cross. Design for Depot Town Association's official letterhead and business cards was proposed and approved. A limited printing was also approved.

Budget & Events - a prospective calendar of events for the coming year was introduced. Budget proposals for activities and events are called for by next meeting. Festival of Lights general chair. Carolyn McKeever, is looking for volunteers to host the park gates and act as representatives of Depot Town's holiday cheer. To schedule your time, contact the Visitors and Convention Bureau at 482-4920.

Artists & Artisans

- Marth Kemnitz will be announcing a standard meeting place and time for A & A. Plans are to begin organizing events, activities, and work to prepare for the upcoming holdiays. Next meeting is Monday, October 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the Old Caboose.

- On the City Planning Commission / Master Planning front, we should be looking for stepped-up zoning enforcement and public hearings as the next step toward Ypsi's master plan.

Merchants' Committee chair, Paul Fetters, reported that the merchants will be mailing flyers outlining Victorian Holiday events.

- Paul made an extensive report on plans to light up Depot Town for the holidays and permanently. The planned lighting improvements will accent and highlight the architectural richness of the area. It is also planned to address the glare of existing lighting and the lighting of the new pedestrian bridge. The project is off to a good start with generous merchant donations (over $2000). DTA has earmarked $1000 from the general fund to aid in the project.

Engineering Society - Neighborhood kids are looking for more jobs to improve our environs. The engineers can be contacted through the DTA.

Best Yet Award - to the Merchants for initiative and generosity shown in lighting us up.

The Golden Goose Award - to the thoughtless lunch-breaking litterbugs in our parks and parking lots. Should be exterminated.

Patronize The Merchants That Bring You The

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Depot Town Rag

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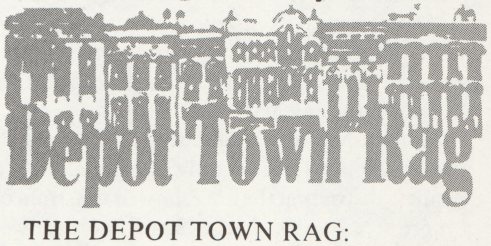
Thanks for the Memories:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the time and effort you put into giving the EMU Summer Quest Program tours of Depot Town each week (this past summer). It is people such as you (down in Depot Town) that allow Eastern Michigan University to offer quality summer academic programs. Your efforts this year helped the staff of the Summer Quest Program provide approximately 125 high school students a rich and rewarding experience. Though we had about only 30 students go on the organized Depot Town tour, many students later expressed the disire to go on the tour after they traveled to Depot Town for ice cream or other attractions. Those that did go on the tour often professed the interesting details of the journey. . .

Sincerely, David C, Schroeter

Eastern Michigan University



THE DEPOT TOWN RAG:

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

The Depot Town Association, Inc.,
Tom Dodd, President
The Caboose, 400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Join your neighbors in creative community cooperation

Your Involvement Makes The Difference

Depot Town Association, Inc., The Old Caboose

☐ Regular (voting) membership for building & business owners = $25

☐ Associate membership, monthly *Depot Town Rag* mailing = $10

☐ Patron membership = $100

Please send me information on the following:

☐ *Depot Town Rag* advertising

☐ Caboose rental

☐ Historic Depot Town Foundation

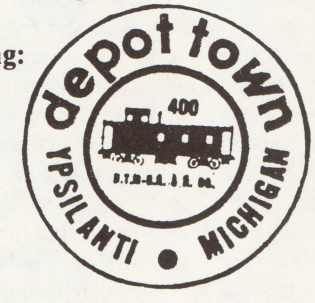
☐ Merchants' Committee

☐ Artists & Atisans

☐ Antique Engine Club

☐ Antique Dealers' Association

☐ Engineering Society



I am interested in helping 'for the good of the block' in the following capacities: _____

_____

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Continued from page one

line across Michigan's lower peninsula was a boon to those who had previously sailed to Mackinaw and around. Ypsilanti was in the middle of a great new development.

Henry Ford, a farm boy from Dearbornville, later moved into the river towns to the west to build mills which would employ off-season farmers in the manufacture of automobile parts for his new venture. He plowed toward Ypsilanti and planted soybeans in the flatland just north-east of the Huron River. Later he established an air strip near the Willow Run, a small creek dumping into the Huron. Ford plants up and down the River created dams for power and man-made Ford Lake was soon filling the space between them. When World War II needed bombers, Ford converted his plant at Willow Run for that purpose and turned out 30 a day at peak capacity. The war effort brought a never-seen-before (or since) kind of prosperity to Ypsilanti. Factory workers put in so many hours that they had little time to spend their new-found wealth. Businesses prospered and some old-Ypsilantians tried to close the local lending library to keep out the 'riff-raff.'

That whole new work force came up from the southern states to help win the war and brought with them a warm and friendly sound whose roots have been traced back to early English and Scottish languages. The melodic 'mountain language' has since melded with the harsher midwestern dialect to become unique to the Ypsilanti area, The old post office was turned into a new library, and it was discovered that these new folks could read, after all. The library continues to be one of the true centers of activity for the community.

Manufacturer, Henry J. Kaiser, whose motto was 'will it run?' moved into this dynamic manufacturing community to take advantage of the work force and the physical facilities. Kaiser, Fraser, Henry J. automobiles soon replaced the war tools that had previously been rolling off the same assembly lines.

General Motors joined the community with Hydramatic, Chevy, Buick, Oldsmobile assembly plants blossoming on the almost obliterated Willow Run. The original central business districts in the area showed the strain of such great popularity as things calmed down to a more steady pace. Large chain stores showed interest in replacing and upgrading but were spurned by local investors. Instead, they moved toward the new concept of off-center shopping malls. Arbor Land and surburban housing developments created a new traffic flow which carefully avoided such old fashioned and congested centers as downtowns and railroad districts.

A unique expressway had been built to serve this new manufacturing area and the Willow Run Expressway looked like a giant race track on maps of the State of Michigan. Super interstate highways carved their way in, around and through all this land surface activity and they soon supplanted the railroad. The depot at Ypsilanti cancelled its passenger service and stood in vacant disrepair for twenty years.

Some of Ypsilanti's older homes which originally housed the wealthy mill owners became museums to enshrine the elegance of the earlier days. The City of Ypsilanti passed a Historic District Ordinance declaring that certian properties could only be maintained in their original condition, The old Fire Hall and a previous auto dealership became nationally known for preserving antique automobiles. A portion of the Willow Run Ariport became the Yankee Air Force, a replicated exhibition of how things used to be. Ypsilanti seemed to have survived the post World War II decline by maintaining its quality and flavor and now, what they had lived through was called 'history.' George Washington had never slept here. Only the workers of middle class America - and they were recognized as having made an important contribution.

Newer industry included such exotic examples as giant frog breeding at the Univeristy of Michigan Labs at Willow Run and frogs were again popularized when the City bought the former high school football field and established Frog Island Park where soccer games, concerts, plays and a circus appear each summer.

The creek known as Willow Run can still be seen just south of I-94 near Lemontree Apartments, and another segment of the original trees still grow over the sewage treatment plant in the center of the airport/factory complex today.

Machines and high technolgy seem to provide the day to day existence in this portion of the former Michigan Territory today, but the long history of the people who established the quality of life in this community is still preserved all around us. Portions of the new community chose to hang on to its roots and, although the quality and style of architecture has changed greatly over the years, the basic human values have remained rooted to those of the past. Not a museum, but a living monument to its heritage, Ypsilanti revels in its past and heartily embraces its future. One of the newer organizations in the area points out that citizens can - and should- help to determine their own future, and if you don't create your own someone else will decide it for you. Down in their old caboose in Depot Town the motto is: 'Firmly rooted in the past, with a clear view forward.' You can see along way from here.

Gingerbread House Contest Approaches Deadline

It will soon be November 1st, the deadline to bring in your entry to the First Annual Depot Town Gingerbread House Contest. The contest, sponsored by the Depot Town Merchants Association, is hoping to have all entries in by November 1st.

The contest is open to ***all*** bakers of ***all*** ages. There is a $100.00 prize for adults and a $25.00 prize for children 12 and under. Entries will be judged by a panel of Depot Town Merchants and local residents. The houses will be displayed in Depot Town from November 15th to January 6th. This will be an added attraction, taking place during the already popular Festival of Lights in Ypsilanti's Riverside Park.

Merchants are hoping to have a variety of entries using candy, cookies, and frosting decorations. Directions for making the houses can be found in most cookbooks and in special Christmas Magazines.

To enter, simply bring your Gingerbread House to the Grand Trunk at 15 E. Cross in Ypsilanti's Depot Town. Call 485-4994 for details. There is no fee for entering.

Artists & Artisans Converge

One of the most exciting new groups to form in Depot Town in the last year is the Depot Town Artists and Artisans, representing painters, potters, printmakers, jewelers and other media. Although many in the group have studios in the district, they are not limited to such geography. Several of the most active members work elsewhere, but show their works at Depot Town events.

At their October meeting they chose the second Monday of each month for their regular meeting date, deferred a studio tour until at least ten locations are available and continued to participate in the Ann Arbor Art Association's life drawing sessions. Much discussion concerned a possible gallery in the block and the Artists and Artisans are eager to talk to prospective property owners and patrons for such an eventuality.

They acted as judges for "safety and creativity" in the Hallowe'en costume contest and their own creative works will be seen at the Farmers' Market Holiday arts and crafts expos on November 28 and December 19.

City Planning Commission member, Martha Kemnitz, will continue to be their spokesperson to the Depot Town Association.

Paponetti's Pasta has found much more table and seating space through judicious rearrangement of counters. A new booth and Italian Green carpet add much to this charming little piece of thd old country.

Paponetti's Pasta
Homemade Italian Food
and Pastries
17 East Cross 483-3574

Shirley Kornilakis and some of the **Old Town waitresses** have been known to do Greek dances for some of their preferred customers. The costumes aren't exactly authentic, but they look great peeking out from behind their kitchen towels as they do their act. Where else can you find this kind of ethnic entertainment at such a good price?

Old Town Restaurant
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
38 East Cross

The Cricket Box
19 East Cross Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
(313) 487-5595

Sidetrack
Good Food, Good Drinks,
Good Times
56 East Cross 483-1053

The Vitamin Shoppe
Vitamins, Herbs,
Nutritional Suppliments
9 East Cross • 485-2711

RAGTIME
Volunteerism is Priceless
Down in Depot Town

Ypsilanti
Recycling Project
651 Rice Street
(just north of the Farmers' Market in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town)
Open every Saturday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Collecting newspaper, glass, used motor oil and ferrous cans
A non-profit organization

Depot Exchange Antiques
Professional Furniture Stripping
54 East Cross

Jim MacDonald's Antiques
Apple Annie's
Vintage Clothing
29 East Cross • 481-0555

The Grand Trunk, Ltd.
Cards & Gifts
15 East Cross 485-4994

Dave Wheeler, of River Street's Utilities Insturmentation now cruises the block in a **1934 Seagrave fire truck.** The red behemoth will be a regular feature at Heritage Festival.

Get Your
Printing At
Standard Printing Company
35 East Cross St. • Ypsilanti, MI

Hansen's building (Standard Printing, Cross Street Antiques, Serenity House) is enjoying the ministrations of scrapers, painters and glaziers this month. Not only will the cornice be repainted but new windows are also being installed. It will soon be as gorgeous as the 1930's photo that hangs over Loren's desk in the print shop.

Thompson Building Mall
Over 4000 square feet of dealers
412 North River • 484-4288

The Thompson Building Antiques Mall, on River Street, had a 'to the bear walls' auction last month just to clear out all that old stuff and make room for more 'new' antiques. Former Depot Towner, Doug Dalton, was the auctioneer for the unique event.

Ted's Auto Electric
307 North River • 483-1238

Aubree's Saloon
& Second Floor
39 East Cross

Pronto Pizza
Pizza & Subs
37 East Cross • 483-4555

VICTORIAN HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSES
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1987
IN YPSILANTI'S HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN